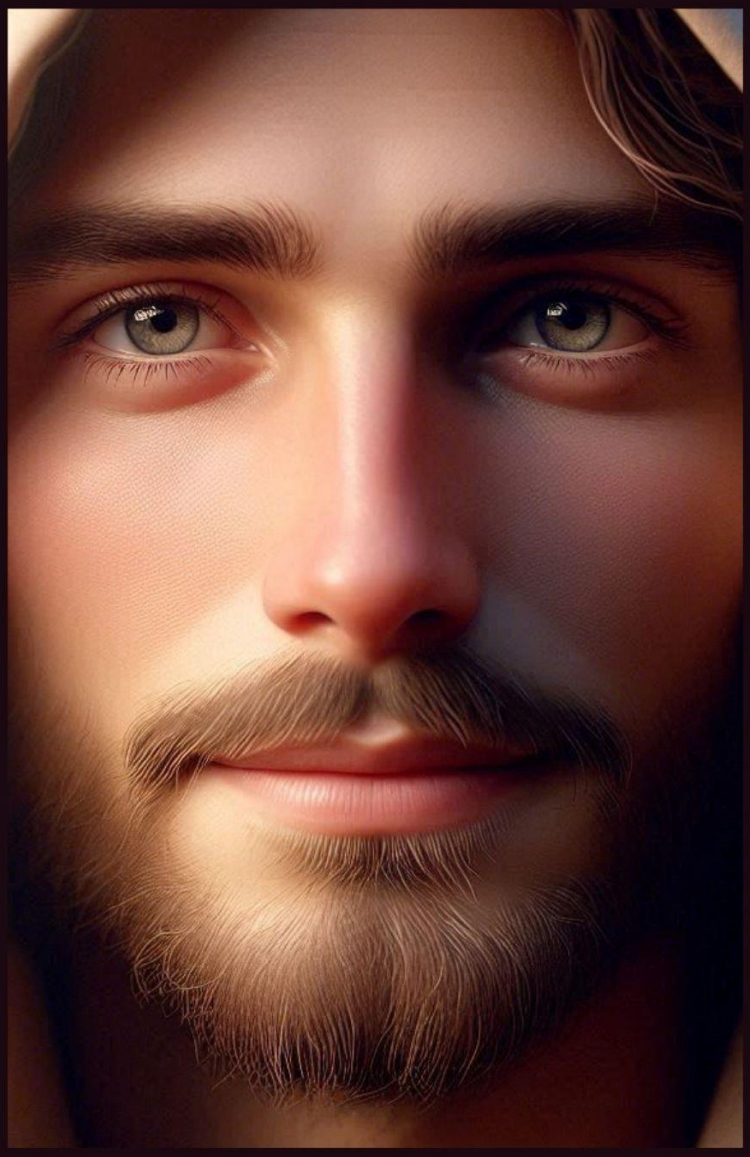
From “Lazarus Revived”



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FROM THE BOOK

"LAZARUS REVIVED"

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BY

IRMÃO X

MESSAGE FROM THE BOOK "LAZARUS REVIVED"

It is said that Lazarus of Bethany, after leaving the sepulcher, experienced one day a deep longing for the Temple, and returned to the sanctuary of Jerusalem for the worship of courtesy and fellowship, although, within his renewed heart, he stood far removed from the endless exchanges of the priesthood.

Upon entering the courtyard, however, he perceived the general hostility. Abiud and Ephraim, rigorist Pharisees, regarded him with disdain and cried out: "He is dead! He is dead! He has returned from the tomb, insulting the Law!"

Both representatives of the theocratic Pharisaism hastened toward the sacred precincts where the Holy of Holies was venerated, in its splendor of gold and silver, ivory and precious woods, rare fabrics and oriental perfumes, spreading the alarming report. Lazarus of Bethany, the dead man who had emerged from the coma, mocking the Law and the Prophets, had come to affront the fathers of the race.

That was enough to stir compact ranks of worshipers who prayed and sacrificed, supposing themselves in the good graces of the Highest. Scribes hurried forward, delivering long and intricate discourses; priests arrived, rigid and furious, casting maledictions; and apprentices of the mysteries, with vestal zeal, advanced with clenched fists, expelling the unwelcome visitor: "Out! Out! Go to the hell — the dead do not speak! Sorcerer, the Law condemns you!"

Lazarus beheld the scene in astonishment. He saw friends of his childhood uttering anathemas, scribes whom he had sincerely admired, pouring forth injurious words.

The enraged companions passed from speech to action. Showers of stones began to fall around the one restored to life, and not content with this, the shrewd Absalom, an old fox of casuistry, seized him by the tunic, intending to lead him before the judges of the Sanhedrin for a condemnatory sentence after a summary inquest.

The brother of Martha and Mary, however, fixed upon those around him a steady and lucid gaze and cried out without hatred:

“Pharisees, scribes, priests, worshipers of the Law, and sons of Israel: He who gave me life has sufficient power to give you death!”

Astonishment and silence followed his words.

The resurrected man of Bethany freed himself from the disrespectful hands that restrained him, composed his garment, and took the road toward the humble dwelling of Simon Peter, where the new brethren shared in fraternal love and living faith.

There, Lazarus felt restored and happy. Within that simple enclosure, of bare walls and rough covering, there were no utensils from Hindustan, no vessels from Egypt, no treasures of Phoenicia, no costly carpets of Persia; yet there throbbed — without the doubts of Science and the conventionalisms of sect — among fervent and simple hearts, the living thought of Jesus Christ, which would renew the entire world, from the sectarian theology of Jerusalem to the political absolutism of the Roman Empire.

Pedro Leopoldo, December 22, 1945